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1. (currently amended) Electric iron ~~having~~ comprising

- a housing (1) and
- a soleplate (2) in which at least one outlet opening (10;15;34;45) is provided,
- means (8;19;28;39,43) for generating a fine liquid spray or foam or steam, and
- means (5) for delivering said generated fine liquid spray or foam or steam through said outlet opening,

characterized in that the iron ~~is provided with~~further comprises

- detection means (12,14;22,23;35,36;49) for detecting the presence of a surface (7a) in the proximity of the soleplate (2) and for generating a detection signal in response to said detection, and ~~with~~
- control means (6) for controlling the delivery of said fine liquid spray or foam or steam in response to said detection signal.

2. (original) Electric iron as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection means comprise a movable spring-loaded contact element (12), said element (12) activating a switch (14) for generating said signal when the soleplate is positioned against said surface (7a) and thus depresses said element (12).

3. (original) Electric iron as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection means comprise resilient means (22) provided between the housing (1) and the soleplate (2), said soleplate being movable with respect to said housing against the force of said resilient means, and comprise a switch (23) provided between the soleplate and the housing for generating said

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signal, said switch (23) being activated when the iron is positioned against said surface (7a) with a force applied to the housing which is greater than the force of said resilient means (22).

4. (original) Electric iron as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection means comprise a light emitter (35) and a photo-sensitive receiver (36) for receiving a reflected light beam (R) from the emitter when the soleplate (2) is in the proximity of said surface (7a), said surface serving as a reflection surface for the light beam, said receiver (36) generating said signal in response to the reflected light beam (R).

5. (original) Electric iron as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection means comprise a pressure detector (4) for detecting the pressure of the generated steam in a flow path (41) between the means (39) for generating said steam and said at least one outlet opening (45) in the soleplate (2), said signal being generated in response to the pressure when the soleplate is in the proximity of said surface (7a) and when said signal exceeds a predetermined threshold value, said iron further comprising a supply duct (47) for adding an additive liquid to the generated steam in said flow path (41), said supply duct (47) having a valve (48) which opens when said signal exceeds said predetermined threshold value.

6. (previously presented) Electric iron as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the iron comprises motion detection means (50) for generating a motion signal in response to a motion of the iron, said control means (6) enabling said detection signal in response to said motion signal.

7. (new) An electric iron comprising:

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- sensing means for sensing presence of a surface proximate to the iron;
- means, responsive to the sensing means, for triggering release of at least one substance onto the surface, responsive to sensing of the presence of the surface, the substance being useful in ironing the surface.

8. (new) The iron of claim 7, further comprising motion detection means, wherein the release of the substance is responsive both to detection of the surface and to detection of motion.

9. (new) Electric iron as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the iron comprises motion detection means (50) for generating a motion signal in response to a motion of the iron, said control means (6) enabling said detection signal in response to said motion signal.

10. (new) Electric iron as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the iron comprises motion detection means (50) for generating a motion signal in response to a motion of the iron, said control means (6) enabling said detection signal in response to said motion signal.

11. (new) Electric iron as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the iron comprises motion detection means (50) for generating a motion signal in response to a motion of the iron, said control means (6) enabling said detection signal in response to said motion signal.

12. (new) Electric iron as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the iron comprises motion detection means (50) for generating a motion signal in response to a motion of the iron, said control means (6) enabling said detection signal in response to said motion signal.